



Senator Dianne Feinstein Renews Call for Expanding Federal Funding for Stem Cell Research

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Washington, DC – U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today renewed her call for expanding federal funding for stem cell research. At a news conference today, Senator Feinstein joined Senators Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Arlen Specter (R-Pa.), and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah), as well as Representatives Diana DeGette (D-Colo.) and Michael Castle (R-Del.), to urge Congressional passage of a bill that would increase the number of stem cell lines available for federal funding. This legislation passed the House and Senate in the 109th Congress, but was vetoed by the President in July 2006.

The measure would effectively reverse the policy announced by President Bush in 2001, when he restricted federal funding to stem cell lines already in existence. Specifically, the bill states that stem cell lines derived from embryos to be discarded from in-vitro fertilization clinics may be used in federally-funded stem cell research, no matter when they were created.

The following are the remarks Senator Feinstein delivered at the press conference:

“This isn’t the first press conference we’ve held. It isn’t the second, third, fourth or fifth. I think we’ve been assembled more than a half a dozen of times to say: ‘The time has come. Let’s get this job done.’

I would ask my colleagues, and I would ask you: Does anyone believe that one day this bill will not be law? I don’t think so. I think we all know it’s going to become law one day.

Now, you have to look at what happened in the last six months since the President vetoed the bill. 1.4 million people have come down with the very diseases that might be helped by stem cell research:

- **700,000 were diagnosed with cancer;**
- **30,000 with Parkinson’s Disease, including my son-in-law;**
- **5,500 Americans with spinal cord injuries; and**
- **750,000 adults with diabetes.**

That's 1.4 million more people that might be helped, but can't be helped. So we all know the time has come. We all know this bill one day will be signed.

There's nothing wrong with the bill. But it's some kind of ideological obstruction that prevents this bill from being signed.

I am strongly of the view we should pass this bill again and again and again until we get a President who will sign it. Hopefully this President will recognize that the time has come. He will recognize that the arguments he has presented are bogus and specious and that the lives of millions of Americans – I think Senator Specter said 110 million Americans, to which within six months we've added 1.4 million additional Americans – whose lives can be helped.

This is one of those few opportunities in public life when there is really something before you that you know can make a difference. If you look around at what's happening in the world, the research is going to happen; it's going to happen, privately funded in the private sector. But it's not going to be developed fully until it can be part of federal research.

I am hoping – Diana, Mike, and my colleagues – that we can change this and we can get this done.

Thank you."

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